

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1. A method for inserting targeted advertisements into a media delivery stream during broadcast media programming, comprising the steps of:

5 (a) storing a plurality of advertisements in a media delivery device in a database, wherein the stored advertisements are each of a type that is determined to appeal to one or more users of the media delivery device;

(b) receiving a signal in the media delivery device to insert a stored advertisement into the media delivery stream during broadcast media programming;

10 (c) inserting an advertisement stored in the database into the media delivery stream.

2. The method for inserting targeted advertisements into a media delivery stream according to claim 1, wherein the advertisements are television commercials.

15 3. The method for inserting targeted advertisements into a media delivery stream according to claim 2, wherein the media delivery device is a set top box for receiving broadcast signals for a cable or satellite television network system.

20 4. The method for inserting targeted advertisements into a media delivery stream according to claim 1, wherein the database includes a table for classifying the stored advertisements according to a plurality of categories, which includes a classification according to the type of advertisement that is stored.

5. The method for inserting targeted advertisements into a media delivery stream according to claim 4, wherein the signal includes at least one classification for one or more of the categories as provided in the table for selecting a commercial stored in the database for insertion into the media delivery stream.

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6. The method for inserting targeted advertisements into a media delivery stream according to claim 5, further comprising the steps of searching the table in the database for at least one advertisement having a classification in at least one category that is provided in the signal.

7. The method for inserting targeted advertisements into a media delivery stream according to claim 6, wherein the at least one advertisement is a plurality of advertisements, further comprising the step of selecting an advertisement from the at least one advertisement having a classification provided in the signal by weighting the relative importance of each category in the table.

8. The method for inserting targeted advertisements into a media delivery stream according to claim 3, wherein the plurality of stored advertisements are received by the media delivery device as encoded data files through a telecommunications link to an external database of advertisements.

9. The method for inserting targeted advertisements into a media delivery stream according to claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

transmitting a request to an external network through a telecommunications link to receive advertisements for storage in the media delivery device;

transmitting signals between the media delivery device and the external network indicating the one or more types of advertisements that appeal to users of the media delivery device;

receiving encoded data files of advertisements through the telecommunications link for storage in the media delivery device; and

classifying the stored advertisements according to a plurality of categories, which includes a classification according to the type of advertisement that is stored.

10. The method for inserting targeted advertisements into a media delivery stream according to claim 4, further comprising the steps of:

receiving download signals from the broadcast media stream in the media delivery device to download advertisements for storage in the media delivery device, wherein, for each advertisement, the signals include a classification for one or more of the categories as provided in the table for selecting a commercial stored in the database for insertion into the media delivery stream;

downloading the advertisements having a classification for one or more of the categories as provided in the table that matches a pre-stored classification in a list of classifications indicating the one or more types of advertisements that appeal to users of the media delivery device.

11. The method for inserting targeted advertisements into a media delivery stream according to claim 10, wherein categories in the table include one or more of: sponsor name; type of product advertised; relative pricing of product advertised; and location of sponsor.

5 12. A media delivery device for inserting targeted advertisements into a media delivery stream, comprising:

- (a) a decoder for decoding broadcast media programming into the media delivery device;
- (b) a commercials database for storing advertisements in the media delivery device;
- (c) a commercial detector for detecting signals to insert a locally stored advertisement from the commercials database into the media stream; and
- (d) means for substituting an advertisement received through broadcast media programming with an advertisement stored in the commercials database.

13. The media delivery device for inserting targeted advertisements into a media delivery stream according to claim 12, wherein the media delivery device is a set top box for cable or satellite television programming.

14. The media delivery device for inserting targeted advertisements into a media delivery stream according to claim 12, further comprising means for inserting advertisements into the commercials database that are classified as a type that appeals to users of the media delivery device.

15. A method for inserting television commercials stored in a set top box connected to a television into a media programming stream, comprising the steps of:

(a) storing a plurality of television commercials advertising products or services for local business concerns in a database, wherein the advertised products are each of a type that has been determined to appeal to one or more users of the set top box;

(b) receiving a signal in the media programming stream from a broadcasting network to insert a television commercial for a local business concern during a segment of airtime allocated for local commercial advertising; and

(c) inserting a television commercial stored in the database into the media programming stream.

16. The method for inserting commercials stored in a set top box into a programming stream according to claim 15, wherein the step of inserting a television commercial further comprises the steps of:

interrupting a media programming stream received from a broadcasting network from the television;

retrieving a selected television commercial stored in the database;

displaying the selected television commercial through the set top box to the television;

and

resuming the media programming stream received from the broadcasting network to the television after completion of the selected television commercial.

17. The method for inserting commercials stored in a set top box into a programming stream according to claim 15, wherein the step of storing commercials in the database further comprises the steps of:

transmitting a request through a telecommunications link to an external server to receive  
5 television commercials for storage in the set top box;

transmitting signals between the set top box and the server to identify the set top box to the server; and

receiving encoded data files of television commercials through the telecommunications link for storage in the set top box.

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18. The method for inserting commercials stored in a set top box into a programming stream according to claim 17, wherein the transmitted signals identify the relative location of a household in which the set top box is operating, relative to a local broadcasting area for a television station.

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19. The method for inserting commercials stored in a set top box into a programming stream according to claim 17, wherein the transmitted signals identify the types of television commercials that are of interest to users of the set top box.

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20. The method for inserting commercials stored in a set top box into a programming stream according to claim 15, further comprising the step of transmitting a record to a broadcasting network identifying the commercial inserted into the programming stream.

21. A system for inserting television commercials stored locally in a television set top box into a media programming stream, comprising:

(a) a receiver for receiving broadcast media programming into the set top box;

(b) a commercials database for storing advertisements in the media delivery device;

5 (c) a commercials detector for detecting audio tones in broadcast media programming that indicate authorization for a local television station to insert a locally stored advertisement into the media stream; and

(d) switching logic to interrupt a television connected to the set top box from the media programming stream and to temporarily decode a television commercial stored in the  
10 commercials database when a substitution signal is detected in the commercials detector.